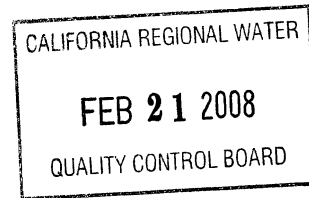


MEMBER OF CONGRESS

BARBARA LEE
NINTH DISTRICT
CALIFORNIA



Mr. John Muller, Chair
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400
Oakland, CA 94612

February 19, 2008

Dear Chairman Muller and Members of the Board,

As the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board prepares to reissue the five-year permit that regulates how much storm water runoff pollution cities and counties are allowed to discharge into the Bay, it is important that the voices of residents of the entire Bay Area are heard.

As you know, trash in the Bay is a serious problem. It is widespread, growing, and harms protected water uses. The Water Board's own study found that, on average, there are three pieces of trash along every foot of stream and creek leading to the Bay. Because much of the trash in our water is plastic, it never biodegrades, and therefore accumulates in massive amounts. It is obvious that trash affects water quality and wildlife. Animals get entangled in trash, suffer and ultimately die. We have sadly learned that wildlife frequently cannot differentiate trash from their regular diets. Often times, animals will eat this debris foreign to their habitat, and starve to death due to the lack of nutrients they are receiving in spite of filling their stomachs with apparent substance. Lastly, trash pollution strongly deters human recreation at creeks, shorelines, and beaches.

I am writing in support of constituent organizations, such as Save the Bay, which is in my district, that have expressed to you a desire to include trash as a pollutant of concern in the Water Board's pending Municipal Regional Permit (MRP). Trash and marine debris are an urgent concern affecting our waterways. It is my understanding that addressing these issues through local water quality regulations has proved challenging, and that the Water Board's capacity to enforce federal law through the Clean Water Act provides an excellent opportunity for our communities to work collaboratively on this matter. I commend the Water Board for proposing these trash provisions, which could prove to be a historic step in reducing garbage and marine debris in our beloved San Francisco Bay.

Enforceable measures and timelines for implementation will allow us to work together and control the urban runoff pollutant that is causing significant damage to what was once one of the most pristine waterways in the world. It is my hope that you will give our expert organizations' request that trash provisions in the upcoming MRP require measurable reductions in trash every consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress